

Message Text

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ORIGIN AEC-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 AID-20 CEQ-02 CIAE-00 COA-02

COME-00 EB-11 EPA-04 INR-10 IO-13 L-03 NSF-04 NSC-10

NSAE-00 PM-07 RSC-01 SCI-06 SS-15 USIE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 HEW-08 ACDA-19 /158 R

DRAFTED BY AEC/ NR: CSCHMITT

6/16/73 EXT. 119-5739

APPROVED BY PM/ AE: HGHANDYSIDE

DOD/ ISA - MR. FRENCH (DRAFT)

OP NAV GIG - CAPT. RAWLINS (DRAFT)

EA/ J - MR. CAMPBELL (DRAFT)

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O 161647 Z JUN 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE

COMNAVFOR JAPAN

CINCPAC

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SECDEF

CNO

COMNAVSHIPSYS COM 08 WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 117988

E. O. 11652: GDS - 12/31/79

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MCAP, TECH, JA

SUBJECT: ALLEGED RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION FROM US NUCLEAR
SUBMARINE OPERATIONS IN OKINAWA

REF: A. TOKYO 7475 (DTG 150130 Z JUN 73)

B. STATE AIRGRAM A-4330 DATED MAY 17, 1973

C. REPORT PUBLISHED BY JAPANESE STA ENTITLED FOURTEENTH
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MEETING ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS OF RADIOACTIVITY
INVESTIGATIONS AND RESEARCH, NOVEMBER 24-25, 1972.

1. REF (A) REPORTED JUNE 14 LOCAL OKINAWA PRESS ARTICLES CONTAIN CHARGE BY ANTI- ATOM/ H- BOMB COUNCIL THAT RECENT STUDY INDICATES NAHA PORT AND WHITE BEACH HAVE BEEN POLLUTED BY RADIOACTIVITY INCLUDING COBALT-60 FROM VISITING NUCLEAR SUBMARINES. BASIS OF CLAIM IS APPARENTLY MATERIAL COMPILED BY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGENCY (STA) AND UNPUBLISHED DATA FROM PUBLIC POLLUTION SANITATION LABORATORY WHICH INDICATE THAT LEVELS OF RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION FOUND IN SEA LIFE TESTED WERE HIGH ENOUGH TO ENDANGER HUMANS.
2. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT PRESS ACTIVITY BOTH IN OKINAWA AND JAPAN COULD INFLATE THIS CHARGE INTO MAJOR ISSUE SUCH AS WAS DONE IN CASE OF SWORDFISH IN SASEBO IN 1968 UNLESS TIMELY ACTION IS TAKEN TO DEFUSE CLAIMS. IF EMBASSY CONCURS, EMBASSY SHOULD RAISE MATTER WITH GOJ AND URGE THAT PROMPT ACTION BE TAKEN TO REFUTE ANTI- ATOM/ H- BOMB COUNCIL CHARGES. EMBASSY SHOULD POINT OUT THAT LATEST US NAVY ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR NAHA AND BUCKNER BAY, WHICH WAS POUCHED BY REF (B) FOR PRESENTATION TO GOJ, CONCLUSIVELY SHOWS THAT US NPW OPERATIONS HAVE NOT CAUSED ANY INCREASE IN THE GENERAL BACKGROUND RADIOACTIVITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN OKINAWAN HARBORS. FIRST AND SECOND QUARTER SAMPLES FOR THIS YEAR HAVE ALSO BEEN EVALUATED AND RESULTS ARE UNCHANGED FROM THOSE REPORTED IN 1972 REPORT.
3. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE REPORT OF STA MONITORING OF OKINAWA FINANCED BY THE JAPAN ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN MAY 1972 WHICH WAS INCLUDED AS THESIS ON PAGE 68 OF REF (C). RESULTS OF SEA WATER AND SEDIMENT SAMPLING ARE CONSISTENT WITH US RESULTS FOR PRESENCE OF COBALT 60, THE ISOTOPE WHICH IS THE PREDOMINANT LONG LIVED RADIONUCLIDE ASSOCIATED WITH LIQUID WASTE FROM US NPW AND THUS THE BEST INDICATOR AS TO WHETHER THESE SHIPS HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

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4. IN THE CASE OF SEA WATER SAMPLES, STA REPORT INDICATED ALL SAMPLES FOR COBALT 60 WERE LESS THAN DETECTABLE. FOR SEDIMENT SAMPLES, THE HIGHEST COBALT 60 READING WAS 8--

178 PICOCURIES PER KILOGRAM (0.178 PICOCURIES PER GRAM)
WHICH ALSO COMPARES WITH RESULTS LISTED IN TABLE 2 OF THE
1972 US NAVY REPORT. FOR YOUR INFORMATION IN THIS

RESPECT, YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT IN US NAVY ENVIRONMENTAL SEDIMENT MONITORING ALL COBALT 60 RESULTS LESS THAN 3.0 PICOCURIES PER GRAM ARE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS LESS THAN DETECTABLE. THIS IS BECAUSE IN THIS LOW RANGE COBALT 60 IS DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH FROM THE MUCH HIGHER LEVELS OF NATURALLY OCCURRING RADIOACTIVITY SUCH AS POTASSIUM 40, RADIUM, URANIUM AND THORIUM. THIS NATURAL RADIOACTIVITY CONTRIBUTES TO THE MEASURED ACTIVITY VALUES IN THIS LOW RANGE EVEN THOUGH COBALT 60 IS NOT PRESENT IN THE SEDIMENT. IN ADDITION, A CONCENTRATION OF 3 PICOCURIES PER GRAM OF COBALT 60 IS SO LOW THAT A MEMBER OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC COULD CONTINUOUSLY CONSUME FOOD CONTAINING MUCH HIGHER LEVELS WITHOUT EXCEEDING THE INTERNAL EXPOSURE LIMITS SPECIFIED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION.

5. THE STA MONITORING REPORT LISTS WATER AND SEDIMENT ANALYSIS FOR FOUR RADIONUCLIDES IN ADDITION TO COBALT 60; THE LEVELS FOR THESE ARE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE FOUND ALL OVER THE WORLD. SAMPLES OF SEA LIFE WERE ALSO MEASURED FOR THE SAME FIVE RADIONUCLIDES WITH COBALT 60 LISTED AS DETECTABLE (0.066 PICOCURIE PER GRAM) IN ONLY ONE OUT OF 40 SAMPLES.

6. LACKING ACCESS TO THE DATA REFERRED TO IN REF (A) WE CANNOT OF COURSE ADDRESS THEIR ACCURACY. IF THE DATA ARE LIKE THOSE CONTAINED IN THE STA REPORT OF REF (C), CHARGES REPORTED REF A MAY BE AN ATTEMPT TO USE, AS AN ARGUMENT THAT THERE IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN, THE MERE FACT THAT RADIOACTIVITY IN ANY AMOUNT CAN BE DETECTED. HOWEVER, REFERENCE TO UNPUBLISHED DATA FROM PUBLIC POLLUTION SANITATION LABORATORY INDICATING LEVELS IN SEA LIFE HIGH ENOUGH TO ENDANGER HUMANS HAS SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC SCARE VALUE AND WARRANTS BEING QUICKLY INVESTIGATED AND REFUTED.

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7. IN SUMMARY WE BELIEVE GOJ SHOULD TAKE QUICK AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO DEAL WITH CHARGES OF ANTI- ATOM/ H- BOMB COUNCIL USING BOTH US NAVY AND STA TECHNICAL DATA THAT ARE AVAILABLE. IN DISCUSSING MATTER WITH GOJ YOU MAY ALSO REITERATE OFFER MADE SEVERAL TIMES PREVIOUSLY TO TAKE JOINT SAMPLES IN OKINAWA AND TO COMPARE RESULTS OF OUR SEPARATE ANALYSES. IF EMBASSY NEEDS TO RESPOND TO PRESS INQUIRY YOU SHOULD REFER TO US NAVY MONITORING RESULTS, PARA 2, AND STATE THAT RESULTS CONFIRM US NPW OPERATIONS HAVE NOT CAUSED ANY INCREASE IN THE GENERAL BACKGROUND RADIOACTIVITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN OKINAWAN HARBORS.

8. DOD PARTICIPATED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS MESSAGE. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE117988
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: CSCHMITT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730621/aaaajdiy.tel
Line Count: 174
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN AEC
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A.TOKYO 7475 (DTG 150130 Z JUN 73), B.STATE AIRGRAM A-4330 DATED MAY 17, 1973
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Nov-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980210
Subject: ALLEGED RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION FROM US NUCLEAR SUBMARINE OPERATIONS IN OKINAWA
TAGS: MARR, MCAP, PFOR, TECH, JA
To: TOKYO INFO CINCPAC
DOD
MULTIPLE
NAHA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005